

REMARKS

Claims 2, 7-9, 13-15, 18, 23-25, 27-37 are canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3-6, 10-12, 16-17, 19-22, 26, and 38-49 remain pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

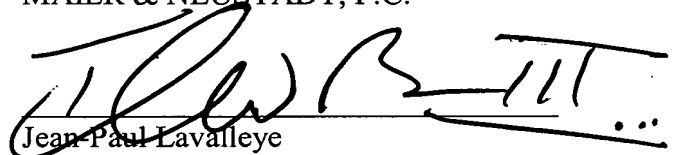
Applicants wish to thank Examiner Fronda for the indicating that Claims 1, 3-6, 10-12, 16-17, 19-22, 26, and 38-49 are allowable and for indicating that the present application would be in condition for allowance if amended to cancel Claims 13-15 and remove non-elected subject matter.

The rejection of Claims 13-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is obviated by the above amendment which cancels this claim. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

An Information Disclosure Statement was filed in the present application on February 11, 2002. An acknowledgment of consideration of the references filed in this Information Disclosure Statement was requested in the responses filed on June 27, 2002, November 27, 2002, and June 25, 2003; however the Examiner has yet to acknowledge consideration of these references. **Therefore, an acknowledgment that the cited references were considered is *once again* requested in the next communication from the Office.**

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. An early notice to this effect is respectfully requested. Should anything further be required to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone.

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